

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1512

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL EQUIP BF

SUBJ: RCA TO EQUIP BAHAMAS TV STATION

REF: (A) NASSAU 1284; (B) NASSAU 1276

1. SUMMARY: RCA HAS REACHED AGREEMENT WITH GCOB TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT FOR TV STATION IN NASSAU. TARGET DATE FOR FIRST BROADCAST IS MAY 11, 1977. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT APPROXIMATELY \$6 MILLION - \$3 MILLION PLUS FOR EQUIPMENT, \$2 MILLION FOR BUILDING. LOCAL TRANSMISSION WILL BE ON CHANNEL 13 AND WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH LOCALLY RECEIVED FLORIDA STATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. RCA MANAGER FOR LATIN AMERICA, A.W. POWER, CALLED EMBASSY ECON OFFICER TO REPORT THAT GCOB HAS REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH RCA TO PROVIDE ALL EQUIPMENT FOR NASSAU TV STATION. APPROXIMATE COST OF EQUIPMENT WILL BE \$3 MILLION PLUS, AND GCOB WILL PAY CASH. ACTUAL STUDIO CENTER BUILDING WILL BE BUILT BY LOCAL FIRM ON SAME SITE AS ZNS RADIO STATION AT A COST OF APPROXIMATELY \$2 MILLION.

RCA PACKAGE INCLUDES: (A) EQUIPPING STUDIO CENTER; THE CENTER WILL BE A ONE-STORY, HALF-BASEMENT BUILDING CONTAINING TWO STUDIOS, A LARGE CENTRAL CONTROL AREA, A SMALL PROGRAM ASSEMBLY AREA AND OFFICES. EQUIPMENT RCA WILL FURNISH FOR STUDIO CENTER WILL COST APPROXIMATELY \$1.3 - \$1.4 MILLION; (B) OUTSIDE BROADCAST BAND: RCA WILL FURNISH TWO CAMERAS AND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT. THE BAND
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WILL BE COMPACT AND STREET BROADCASTING WILL BE POSSIBLE.

THERE WILL ALSO BE ELECTRONIC NEWS-GATHERING EQUIPMENT - APPROXIMATE COST \$350,000; (C) TRANSMITTER TOWER: ANTENNAE AND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT. TOWER WILL BE 350 FT. HIGH AND THERE WILL BE A 30 KW TRANSMITTER. COST APPROXIMATELY \$2.4 MILLION.

3. LOCAL PROGRAMMING WILL BE RECEIVED ON CHANNEL 13 AND WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH SEVEN FLORIDA CHANNELS RECEIVED LOCALLY WITH RECEPTION RANGING FROM GOOD TO AWFUL. SYSTEM WILL BE NTSCC OR SAME AS US SYSTEM. INITIALLY THEY PLAN FOR SIX HOUR BROADCASTING DURING PRIME TIME IN THE EVENINGS. THE PRIME MINISTER, WALTER WISDOM (GENERAL MANAGER OF BAHAMAS BROADCASTING CORPORATION), AND MR. CADWELL ARMBRISTER (MP AND CHAIRMAN OF BAHAMAS BROADCASTING CORPORATION) ARE CURRENTLY IN LONDON DISCUSSING TV PROGRAMMING WITH BBC (THIS HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED ON LOCAL PRESS AND ON RADIO). ACCORDING TO POWER THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN TO STATES TO DISCUSS TV PROGRAMMING. THEY ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING.

4. ACCORDING TO POWER GCOB SENT OPEN INVITATIONS TO BID INTERNATIONALLY - SIX COMPANIES RESPONDED WITH RCA BEING ONLY AMERICAN COMPANY. INITIALLY RCA BID WAS EVALUATED AS HIGHEST RECEIVED BUT POWER CAME DOWN AND WENT OVER BID WITH GCOB HIRED CONSULTANT NEWTON JAMES (JAMAICAN NATIONAL) WHICH RESULTED IN \$400,000 REDUCTION OF EVALUATION MAKING RCA LOWEST BIDDER. POWER SAID THAT CABINET, PARLIAMENT AND PM HAVE ALL APPROVED CONTRACT AND THAT LETTER OF INTENT AND ADVANCE SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY HIM TODAY (SEPTEMBER 22).

5. POWER BELIEVES THAT GCOB WILL OFFER CHIEF ENGINEER POSITION TO NEWTON JAMES WITH MIKE THOMPSON WHO IS CURRENTLY ASSISTANT CHIEF ENGINEER AT ZNS MOVING TO SAME POSITION WITH TV STATION. POWER SAYS THAT LACK OF TRAINED PERSONNEL WILL BE OBVIOUS PROBLEM AND RCA HAS OFFERED A TRAINING PROGRAM WHICH GCOB HAS ACCEPTED IN PART. ALTHOUGH GCOB INTENDS FOR STATION TO EARN MONEY POWER BELIEVES IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME FOR THAT TO HAPPEN - IF EVER.

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6. EMBASSY COMMENT: THERE IS NO INDICATION OF WHEN GCOBO WILL MAKE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF RCA CONTRACT OR IF THEY WILL ANNOUNCE TARGET DATE. POWER HAS ASKED THAT ALL ABOVE INFORMATION REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL GCOB MAKES PUBLIC STATEMENT. EMBASSY WILL NOTIFY DEPARTMENT AS SOON AS THAT OCCURS.

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